

Father had to tell his family 'Dave is never coming home'

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"We don't sit back and say, 'Well, that's good enough. We're on top.' We want to make it better. Fatalities are still up there and that's something we still need to do something about," said Flynn.

"We've got orientation training as mandatory in the province. There are a lot of things we're doing that help to ensure we get better."

Ellis' 18-year-old son, Dave, was killed in a workplace accident on the second day of his job at a small bakery in Oakville.

The father recalled the day of the incident in 1999, encouraging those in attendance to "travel with me on this. I can't get through this alone."

"As I drove over here to this high school,

I thought, 'I don't know if I can do this again.' But it's my journey in life right now," said Ellis. "Get in the car with me right now and think of somebody you love."

Ellis arrived at the hospital and "in the corner of your eye, you could see the doctor waiting for you to get out of the car," he said.

"You and I get out of the car, I want you to take a lead on this, please. I will follow behind," Ellis asked the crowd.

"Go over and shake the doctor's hand. The doctor looks at you and says, 'Come with me. I'm really very sorry. This is really serious.'"

When Ellis entered the room with the doctor, he said he wanted to go in and pick his son up in

my arms and take him home where he would be safe, but couldn't.

He noted Dave was taken by helicopter to Toronto's Sunnybrook Hospital, but after the sixth day of hospitalization, there was bad news.

"The doctor comes up to me and you and says, 'I'm really very sorry. Your loved one is not going to make it. We're going to have to take him off the life-support machine,'" said Ellis.

The Oakville dad went back to his family to say, "Dave is never coming home," Ellis said.

"It just absolutely tore me apart. My younger son looked up at me and said, 'Dad, will you just go and get Dave and let's get out of this hospital?' I said, 'No, he can never come home,'" said Ellis.

"You never forget the tears rolling down a little guy's face. All he wanted was his 18-year-old brother to come home."

Ellis said he doesn't want anyone from his "Canadian family here" to go through what his family has.

After his son's death, Ellis started the Our Youth at Work charitable foundation to prevent other young workers from dying or getting hurt at work.

"Canadians together, when they're challenged, can get better — not just for older people like me, but for younger people like you. We need to fight and we need to make it better. That's what Canadians do best," he added.



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